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Website : www.statetimes.in, Email: statetimes1@gmail.com

Indian troops standing firm; talks with China to continue: Rajnath

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Hailing the Indian Army's actions in "truly" protecting the integrity and sovereignty of the country, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said that while the troops are standing firm in eastern Ladakh, the ongoing talks for peaceful resolution of the crisis will continue.

In an address to the top commanders of the Army, the defence minister described the Army as one of the "most trusted and inspiring" organisations in the country and said it is a national responsibility to provide the best weapons, equipment and clothing to the troops braving extreme weather and hostile forces to defend India's territorial integrity.

Nearly 50,000 Indian Army troops are currently deployed in a high state of combat readiness in various mountainous locations in eastern Ladakh in sub-zero conditions as multiple rounds of talks between India and China have not yielded con-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the Army Commanders' Conference in New Delhi on Wednesday.

crete outcome to resolve the row.

The defence minister also clearly asserted that there will be no budgetary constraints to enhance the capability of the Army and meeting its other requirements.

In a tweet after his address to the commanders, Singh said the government will leave no stone unturned to strengthen the "arms of our Armed forces" and that it is

force for its high standard of operational preparedness and capabilities, which he experienced first-hand during his visits to forward areas.

Talking about reform initiatives to strengthen combat capabilities of the armed forces, Singh mentioned plans to roll out integrated battle groups, integrated theatre commands and integrated air defence commands, and called them "game-changers" in the way Indian armed forces will fight future wars.

In his address, Singh also paid tributes to the "brave-hearts" of Galwan, Kashmir and the Northeast for making the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of the motherland, the Army said in a statement.

The defence minister, while commenting on the current situation along the northern borders, expressed confidence that while troops are standing firm, the ongoing talks for peaceful

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Govt appoints two media consultants to LG

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The Government on Wednesday appointed Yatish Yadav as senior media consultant and Dr. Dushyant Kumar Rai as media consultant in the Information Department on nomination basis.

The senior media consultant will be paid Rs 1,50,000 salary per month while the media consultant will draw salary of Rs 80,000 per months, according to an order issued here. Cumulatively they will

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Two J&K cadre IPS officers get DGP rank

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The government on Wednesday promoted two IPS officers of J&K Cadre to the rank of DGP Grade (Level-16 on the Pay Matrix):

"Lalatendu Mohanty, a 1989 batch IPS officer, has been promoted to the grade of Director General of Police (DGP) with effect from January 1, 2019 while Dr. B. Srinivas, a 1990 batch IPS officer, has been

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NIA raids trusts, NGOs in fresh terror funding case

Series of raids at 10 locations in Kashmir, 1 in Karnataka; journalists, human rights activists, Bengaluru woman under scanner

■ AHMED ALI FAYYAZ

JAMMU: The National Investigation Agency on Wednesday conducted a series of raids and searched as many as 10 premises in the Kashmir valley and one in Karnataka in what the officials call a 'fresh terror funding case' registered early this month.

Significantly it was for the first time after the NIA intensified its operations in Jammu and Kashmir in 2017 that the premises of some newspaper or a prominent journalist were searched. In the forenoon, the NIA sleuths with a huge security detail swooped on Mushtaq Press Enclave in Srinagar. They walked into Srinagar headquarters of the leading English daily Greater Kashmir and questioned the staff about the activities and accounts of a medical trust operated by the media group.

Sources said that the search party took several



documents into custody. However, none of the owners or the employees was harassed or arrested.

Sources said that one NIA team conducted a raid on the residence of a prominent journalist Pervaiz Bukhari who has in the past worked with Zee TV, Star News, and Times of India besides a foreign news agency. He is known to be a friend of some human rights activists but does not operate any trust or Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). It was not immediately clear if the

NIA team seized anything at Mr Bukhari's house.

Raids were simultaneously carried out on the houses and offices of the two prominent human rights activists Khurram Pervez and Parveena Ahangar. While Khurram Parvez has been running Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society since early 1990s, Mrs Ahangar has been operating Association of the Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP). Both have been highlighting the

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J&K PCC opposes new land laws; PDP stages protest

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU/SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir unit of the Congress on Wednesday joined the other mainstream parties in opposing the new land laws notified by the Centre for the union territory.

"The Congress party rejects the new land laws and vows to fight for the protection of people's rights," JKPC president Ghulam Ahmad Mir said while addressing a public gathering in the Gurez area of Bandipora district.

He termed the new land laws as an assault on the rights of people and said the Congress party would not accept such "anti-J&K decisions" by the Centre.

The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration, an amalgam of various mainstream parties in Jammu and Kashmir including the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), had also condemned the amendments to the land laws and pledged to fight it on all fronts.

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J&K Excise Scam: After 24 years, Court finds accused guilty of forgery

Offences of cheating, forgery made out against 10 surviving accused out of 16

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: After 24 years of filing of charge-sheet by the Crime Branch Jammu in the then much publicised 'Excise scam 1995-96', the Court on Wednesday found the accused prima facie guilty of commission of offences of cheating and forgery which had caused loss of around Rs 3 crore to the government.

The order in this regard was announced by Additional Sessions Judge Jammu Tahir Khurshid Raina today on virtual mode. However,

charge will now be framed against accused on next date of hearing, provided physical hearing in courts will start.

As per details, a scam in the Excise Department Jammu surfaced in 1995-96, then popularly called Excise scam which caused around Rs 3 crore loss to government exchequer. The scam was related to payment of contract bid of country liquor vendts which was then allotted by Government to M/s Kuldip Singh and Co, for

supply of country liquor

vends to six different groups in Jammu province.

The contract bid amount fixed to be given by aforesaid firm to the Excise department was Rs 13,23,00,000 (Rupees Thirteen crore, twenty three lakh) which was to be paid by the firm in 24 fortnight installments first starting from April 1995 to 31st March 1996.

The bid money was to be deposited in banks and treasuries, and thereafter their receipts and vouchers were to be presented before Excise

Office Jammu to get permit of equal quantity of liquor to be purchased from Ware House on still head price. A bulk of more than 17,000 ltr liquor was allotted to the firm against above quoted bid money.

However, at end of financial year, DC Excise Jammu made a verification of bid amount paid by the firm. During verification, he found some receipts and vouchers doubtful and sent them to concerned treasury

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Two terrorists gunned down

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Two unidentified terrorists were killed by security forces in an encounter that broke out on Tuesday night in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said.

Security forces launched a cordon-and-search operation at Moachwah in Chadoora area of Budgam district around 7 pm on Tuesday following information about the presence of terrorists there, a police official said. He said the search operation

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No agricultural land in J&K to be alienated to non-residents of UT: LG

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Wednesday launched Market Intervention Scheme (MIS)-2020 for Apple here at Horticulture Complex, Raj Bagh.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor refuted the media reports and assured that no agricultural land would be alienated to any non-residents of J&K. However, for industrial investment and employment



LG Manoj Sinha addressing gathering during launch of MIS for Apple at Srinagar.

opportunities, non-agricultural land would be optimally

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2 Army personnel injured in mine blast along LoC in Poonch

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Two Army personnel were injured in a mine blast along the Line of control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Wednesday, official sources said.

The two personnel stepped on an anti-personnel mine triggering a blast during patrolling along the LoC in the Balakote sector. They have been moved to a hospital for treatment, they said.

India continues to be among countries with lowest per million COVID-19 cases, deaths

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: With calibrated measures and focussed strategy of the Centre along with the states and UTs, India has sustained its global position of recording one of the lowest COVID-19 cases as well as deaths per million population, the Union health ministry said on Wednesday.

While the global figure for COVID-19 cases per million is 5,552, India is reporting 5,790 cases per million

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J&K reports four more deaths, 536 fresh cases

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday recorded 536 fresh COVID-19 cases, while four fatalities took place in the past 24 hours, taking the infection tally to 93,213 and death toll to 1,455, officials said. Out of the fresh cases, 199 are from Jammu and 337 from the Kashmir Valley, the officials said. Srinagar district reported the highest

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Terrorist hideout unearthed in Poonch

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Security forces have busted a terrorist hideout in a forest area in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, leading to recovery of a cache of arms and ammunition, a senior police officer said on Wednesday.

The hideout was unearthed during an overnight joint operation by police and Rashtriya Rifles in the forest area of Kalaban in Mendhar sector, Senior Superintendent of

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Digra gets addl charge of HoD Surgery GMC

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The government on Wednesday assigned additional charge of Nasib Chand Digra, Secretary (Technical) in the Health & Medical Education Department.

According to an order issued by Atal Dulloo, Financial Commissioner Health & Medical

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WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)

Max: 30.6°C Min: 12.9°C

Humidity

Max: 61 Min: 44

Temperature (Srinagar)

Max: 21.3°C Min: 0.3°C

Humidity

Max: 72 Min: 51

Sunset : 17:46 Hours

Sunrise : 06:47 Hours

Abrogation of Art 370: Curse or blessing for Jammu?

Majority of Jammuites are of the opinion that abrogation of Article 370 is not being taken to its logical conclusion. In this framework, Jammu is still a slave and hostage to the hegemony of Kashmir. BJP Government's much boasted step was nothing less than political sloganeering otherwise also we lost much and gained less.



Advocate Sushant Samnotra, former Treasurer, J&K High Court Bar Association: On August 5, 2019, the BJP led NDA Government scrapped Article 370 and Article 35-A with much fanfair without creating congenial atmosphere involving different sections of the society through debates and discussions much-less the political leadership of the erstwhile State in the process. They claimed from the house-tops that all problems including terrorism, unemployment, nepotism, corruption, separatism and favouritism will wither away with the scrapping of Article 370 and Article 35-A, what they described as unprecedented step purportedly mentioned in BJP's election manifesto claiming that the slogan of 'Ek Vidhan, Ek Pradhan, Ek Nishan'.

As far as Article 370 of the Constitution of India is concerned, it was there purportedly to protect the Special Status as well as autonomy of the erstwhile State.

It is pertinent to mention here that with the passage of time Article 370 was losing its teeth. The then Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru's words are too clear an indication towards the potency of Article 370. He in an unambiguous terms announced many years back that Article 370 'Ghiste Ghiste Ghis Jayega'.

In this scenario, BJP Government's much boasted step was nothing less than political sloganeering, otherwise also we lost much and gained less.

What was left in the Article 370 after the abolition of institution of Sadr-e-Riyasat and Prime Minister and their replacement by Governor and Chief Minister and the extension of the jurisdiction of the Election Commission and the Supreme Court in the context of India. Moreover, Article 370 virtually lost its identity when permit system of arrival was abolished.

Pertinently all these steps were taken when the Congress and not the BJP was holding the reins of power in the Centre and National Conference in the J&K State.

Especially when all this happened neither the popular government was dismissed, assembly was dissolved nor for that purpose entire political leadership including 3 former CMs were put behind the bars under draconian Preventive Detention Laws nor political process was banned nor people were confined within their houses under undeclared curfew and undeclared suspension of Fundamental Rights including the Right of Speech & Expression.



Advocate Ankur Sharma, Chairman IkkJutt Jammu: Articles 370 and 35A legally ensured that Indian Constitution would not apply to a Muslim Majority State. The idea behind the Article was communal. Its abrogation is something Jammu fought for and 5th August, 2019 was a day of victory for all Indians who believe in the Constitution of India.

However, post abrogation, the Union Government is ironically following the same Nehruvian Policy Paradigm of the last 70 years. Consequentially, the abrogation is not being taken to its logical conclusion. In the paradigmatic policy framework, Jammu is still

a slave and hostage to the hegemony of Kashmir.

Discrimination with Jammu in matters of Public Employment and Development is still a reality. Demographic Invasion of Jammu is going on unabated. Effective steps are being taken by the Government for further disempowering Jammu Politically.

Conducting delimitation on the basis of fraud, fudged and anti-Jammu Census 2011 is a case in point. The ongoing Delimitation will enslave Jammu again for the next at least fifteen years.



Vijay Koul, a retired J&K government employee said, "Abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A was a strong and historic step taken with a hope that a new era of development will usher in J&K Union Territory and it was welcomed by one and all. But as time passed, it became imminent that people of Jammu Province were at the same place where they were before 5th August, 2019. On ground level, the changes and development is zero. People feel befooled and believe they have been given broken promises, false hopes, unemployment, financial mess and it seems that they may lose their identity and culture in near future if the situation and attitude of leaders and centre remains same. We are feeling helpless as our demands and issues are not even being considered. There is no benefit to Jammuites after August 5, 2019. It's another failure."